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15 April 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Members,
National Intelligence Survey Committee

SUBJECT: NIS Program

REFERENCE: CINCNELM Report, Serial 9450
of 12 March 1959, subject:
NIS of Middle East Areas;
comments on the adequacy of

1. Reference report stems from an NIS Committee inquiry into the adequacy and use of pertinent parts of the NIS during the Middle East crisis in 1958. The report is based on comments from the principal U.S. Commands involved in Middle East planning and operations and represents a fair appraisal of the usefulness and adequacy of NIS coverage during an actual military operation. In essence, the report states that the NIS is widely used by all commands and, for COMSIXINTFLT, constituted the most important single source of both general and specific information on Middle East and Mediterranean countries. The report particularly noted the lack of adequate maintenance and suggested that in general the NIS be comprehensively maintained at intervals not to exceed five years.

2. From the NIS Committee viewpoint, the outstanding import of the CINCNELM report is the categorical requirement for the full range of NIS topical coverage at least to the degree of detail which we now provide. The CINCNELM report further underlines the continuing concern of the NIS Committee for increasing the Maintenance production (approaching 50% of present contributions) at a time when over-all NIS production in the contributing agencies is being seriously affected by reductions of manpower and diversions of effort to crash and other departmental projects.

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3. The problem of balanced NIS production with respect to world area coverage and Initial vs. Maintenance effort is both complex and variable. Only last year the JCS raised Middle East Areas to Priority I and most Africa Areas to Priority II. On the other hand, many of the contributing agencies' staffs are organized along regional lines which restrict the flexible use of such staffs to augment higher priority areas at the expense of lower priority areas. Nevertheless, it is imperative that we throw maximum capabilities into Maintenance production of NIS on Priority I and II Areas. The OSI Staff Study on Maintenance delineates this problem and indicates some 422 Initial sections (mostly on Priority I and II Areas) produced and dated prior to FY 1953 which have not as yet been scheduled for Maintenance through FY 1962. Moreover, the basic intelligence in these sections was developed during the early phases of the NIS program when requirements were still being refined and augmented and post World War II data were largely inadequate. In too many cases these were the only NIS available to CINCNELM and his commands and about which the report is critical.

4. The divergence of NIS production to completing selective Priority II Areas and to maintaining NIS on Priority I and II Areas will leave largely untouched the Priority III Areas, mainly on Latin America. Yet there are increasing national security interests in that area. It is evident, therefore, that if the NIS program is to fulfill its mission as laid down by the NAC -- to produce and continuously maintain that basic intelligence required in the interest of national security -- it is necessary that we re-examine the capabilities which can be assigned to the NIS by stopping essentially duplicative departmental production and by adapting certain departmental periodic intelligence publications to direct support of the NIS. To these ends I request that each NIS Committee member examine his departmental situation in context with the CINCNELM report and the larger implications of the NIS program as a whole and prepare a report as a basis for early NIS Committee consideration and necessary recommendation to the Chairman, U.S. Intelligence Board.

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1. Other comments and recommendations in the CINCNELM report deserve the most careful consideration by the NIB Committee and its member agencies. Recommendation concerning a loose-leaf type format has already been exhaustively explored by the Committee and determined to be infeasible (refer to Item 3 NCM 273). The question of reducing the excessive time elapsing between departmental compilation and final dissemination of NIB units has been carefully examined this past year and improvement attained in printing time reduction. Other factors include review time at the departmental and CIA levels and the backlog of contributions resulting from the year's end production peak. Improving the quality of contributions to lessen review time and sustaining production throughout the year for efficient processing are principal factors yet to be resolved by the member agencies.

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Chairman, NIB Committee

cc: Deputy Director/Intelligence
Deputy Director/Coordination
Director for Intelligence/The Joint Staff

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